



San Francisco Human Services Agency

Family and Children's Services Disaster Response Plan

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This plan specifies the disaster response policies and procedures to be implemented after a major emergency has been declared by the San Francisco Human Services Agency Executive Director or designee.

During major emergencies, the Family and Children's Services Program's primary mission objectives are the following:

- Locate and continue services to all foster children in the Agency's care, with prioritized response to the most vulnerable clients, including medically fragile, disabled, and severely emotionally disturbed children.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of unaccompanied minors until they are connected with their parents or other family members.
- Preserve essential client records
- Respond as appropriate to new child welfare referrals
- Support the Agency's city-wide disaster response roles

This plan follows the template provided the California Department of Social Services and meets all of the Federal requirements enumerated in Section 6 (a)(16) of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 [Public Law (PL) 109-288].

CWS Disaster Response Criteria A: Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by disaster

1. Identification and location process of children who may be displaced

GIS coordinated response. The San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) will use geographic information systems (GIS) to help manage its disaster response to foster children. Before and after disasters, the agency will map the residences of the agency's foster children throughout the nine Bay Area Counties and use the information in conjunction with in-coming damage assessments to deploy workers to the most disaster affected areas. HSA staff will use the maps and rosters¹ to locate and check on the agency's foster children. Once contact has been made, the HSA worker will assess the safety and well-being of the child, and if necessary direct the family to disaster relief resources or remove the child from the family's care.

If a GIS specialist is not available and ad hoc maps or spatial analysis is needed, a step-by-step GIS tutorial explaining how to map our clients is available in the Disaster Preparedness folder on the O drive of the Agency's network server.

Prioritized response to medically fragile children. Twenty-four hour response will be prioritized to pre-identified medically at-risk children (MARC) and "Baby Moms."² HSA will contact all other foster children as quickly as possible.

Protecting and updating client records. The data extracts and maps for current foster care cases are automatically updated monthly. The data extracts from the Child Welfare System Case Management System (CMS) contain essential contact information stored in Excel format. The maps are stored in PDF format, thus eliminating the need for specialized GIS software to view the maps. To help ensure the accessibility of the files during emergencies, these electronic files are also backed up on agency servers and the portable hard drives of key executive staff. If critical infrastructure is inaccessible and power is unavailable, disaster managers should use the agency laptop, a portable printer, and a car with a power inverter to access and print the maps and rosters.

Identifying foster families in shelters. HSA and the Bay Area Chapter of the American Red Cross are developing a memorandum of understanding and court order to share data so as to identify foster families entering Red Cross disaster shelters. HSA will provide the Red Cross a list of our client names and their birthdates. Red Cross will then search their Disaster Victim Inquiry System and notify HSA about client matches. Once HSA identifies foster children staying at shelters, the Agency will contact them to verify their status and connect the family to available resources as necessary.

¹ The rosters will be in spreadsheet format and contain essential identifying information about foster children including children's names, addresses, phone numbers, caretaker names, and medically fragility.

² Baby moms are a sub-category of MARC's which include children whose severe health condition may rapidly deteriorate within 24 hours and result in death if the necessary medical care is not provided.

Managing disaster response. The nature of HSA's response will depend on the location and scale of the disaster, time of day, and availability of staff. The agency will dedicate available staff and resources to disaster response as appropriate given the scale and type of event.

For a disaster that occurs during business hours, all staff are expected to immediately report to their supervisor or the available next higher ranking manager. Some HSA staff members may be released from duty to check on their families. Before dismissal, however, these workers will be given maps, client rosters, and an assignment to check on foster families that live close to them to ensure the safety and well-being of the foster children. This task should be accomplished within 24 hours. Workers will be expected to report back to duty as instructed prior to dismissal. Given that the bridges and mass transit systems may be inoperative, workers that reside outside the disaster area may be requested to remain on duty and help the Agency to implement its immediate disaster response.

For a disaster that occurs during non-business hours, HSA managers and supervisors will activate the phone trees as discussed in Section 12 of this document. HSA workers with pre-determined immediate response roles will be expected to automatically check on their assigned foster children within a specified time frame and report back to their supervisors by phone or through the Agency's emergency website (<http://www.sfhsaemergency.org/>). Unless otherwise instructed, HSA workers without pre-assigned response roles will be expected to report to work at their regularly scheduled work time.

2. Communication process with foster care providers

After a disaster strikes, HSA will contact all of its foster care providers to ensure the safety and well-being of the foster children within their care. Prioritized contact will be given to foster homes with medically at-risk foster children, group homes, and/or those located in the most heavily impacted disaster areas. Workers will first try to establish contact with foster families using phones if possible. If telecommunications are down or if after repeated attempts the family and its designated emergency contact are unreachable, then workers will make home visits to verify the status of the foster children.

In the future, HSA plans to gather information from caregivers about where they will evacuate to in the event of an emergency and contact information for that location. Ideally the state would add this field to the CWS/CMS system to facilitate disaster response efforts. Additionally, foster families evacuating the area will be instructed to notify the Agency as soon as possible and provide information about where the family is evacuating to and how to contact them in the future. Group homes will also be instructed to communicate with the Agency regarding the status of children in their care as soon as possible.

HSA has established an out-of-state Agency website (<http://www.sfhsaemergency.org/>) for use in a disaster and an associated email address. The Agency has plans to provide caregivers with instructions about how and what to communicate with the Agency in case phone systems are overloaded or inoperative. This will help prevent messages on absentee social workers' voicemail systems being unheard and enable the Agency to review messages from families once IT systems resume operations.

3. Evacuation procedures

HSA will defer to the SF Department of Emergency Management and other public safety departments to issue evacuation orders. HSA does not have the authority, expertise, access to information, or infrastructure to execute evacuations.

HSA recommends its foster families residing in San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo Counties subscribe to AlertSF. AlertSF is a text-based notification system for San Francisco's residents and visitors. AlertSF sends watches and warnings for tsunamis, flooding and tornados and citywide post-disaster information to registered wireless devices and email accounts. Registrants can also sign up to receive English-language automated information feeds and/or alerts targeted to specific areas of the City.

Families relocating to other areas are required to send an email to the Agency's designated address or call the Hotline as soon as possible to update their contact information including address and phone numbers. If Hotline workers are unavailable, a voicemail system will provide instructions and allow the family to leave messages about how to contact them in the future.

4. Shelters

HSA is responsible for the citywide mass care and shelter function. As such, the Agency has worked with the local Red Cross office to identify over 80 potential shelter sites within the city. This is in addition to a shelter system developed by local faith based networks.

Unlike other counties, San Francisco does not normally operate a child welfare shelter. Instead, HSA has a Child Protection Center (CPC) for children entering the Child Welfare System due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Under normal circumstances, the center provides safety and health assessments and temporary care for children (for a maximum of 23 hours) while an appropriate placement is found.

During a major emergency, the CPC will process the intake of unaccompanied minors and provide emotional support, nourishment, medical assessment, and crisis intervention/mental health assessment as needed until the children are reunified or other placements are secured. If the influx of unaccompanied minors exceeds the capacity of the CPC's facilities, the children may be temporarily sheltered at a nearby facility. HSA

is currently developing memoranda of understanding with its contractors to provide these shelters during emergencies.

For disasters occurring during school hours, children at school will be sheltered in place until their parents are able to pick them up. Otherwise, first responders – including police, fire, and medical workers – are currently instructed to take unaccompanied minors to HSA’s Child Protection Center (CPC), which is co-located with the County General Hospital. HSA’s Disaster Operation Center will be in regular communication with the CPC following an event.

HSA workers may be deployed to shelters for 12 hour shifts to process the initial intake and registration of unaccompanied minors, including follow-up action to reunite unaccompanied minors with their parents/guardians or to provide appropriate temporary placement. As noted above, HSA is also developing a procedure by which foster children entering Red Cross shelters will be identified and reported back to HSA.

5. Parental notification

Following a disaster, HSA will make reasonable efforts to contact the biological parents of the Agency’s foster children and provide information about the status of their children as it becomes available. However, the immediate priority will be to secure the location and safety of children in care.

6. Continuity of services

During or after a disaster, HSA is not absolved from any of its State mandated child abuse referral responsibilities; however, Government Code 8567 does allow the Governor to make, amend, and rescind State regulations. If necessary, HSA may submit a request to the Governor through the county’s Emergency Operations Center to suspend appropriate State mandated child abuse referral responsibilities.

Following a disaster, CWS offices will likely be unable to meet all State and Federal regulations within mandated timeframes, and the courts may be temporarily closed and thus unable to issue orders and waivers needed by local CWS agencies. Furthermore, multiple counties are likely to be affected by the disaster and it would be inefficient for them to independently issue separate waivers. The California Department of Social Services should have a set of waivers and orders – e.g. a standing order to allow CWS to authorize medical treatment for children with no parent or guardian available to authorize treatment, orders temporarily extending legal timeframes for response to referrals, etc. – ready for the Governor to sign immediately after a disaster event.

Immediately after a disaster, HSA will dedicate available resources as needed to continue all State and Federal mandated services. To help ensure continued delivery of benefits following a disaster, HSA plans to encourage foster families to receive payments by

direct deposit. This will help prevent delays in check processing due to interrupted mail service, families evacuating their homes, or destruction of HSA infrastructure. After a disaster event, scheduled benefit payments will automatically continue for two months. To provide incentive for families to contact HSA and provide an update on the status of the foster child(ren) in their care, foster families are expected to contact the Agency within the two-month post-disaster period. If the foster family fails to do so, benefit payments will discontinue.

HSA will shift staff responsibilities as necessary to help maintain continuity of core services for the Agency's existing foster children and new referrals. Non-essential functions such as adoption services may be temporarily suspended as necessary.

7. Staff assignment process

All City and County employees are designated by both State and City law as "Disaster Service Workers." When the Mayor or the designated next in command declares an emergency, all public employees are obligated to serve as Disaster Service Workers and may be assigned to perform activities outside of their normal duties that promote the protection of public health and safety or the preservation of lives and property. HSA staff responsibilities may change as reasonable and necessary to help fulfill the Agency's City, State, and Federally mandated response roles. As per City policy, HSA staff will not be expected to perform disaster response duties that are unsafe or that they do not know how to perform.

As previously noted, some HSA staff will have pre-designated immediate disaster response duties, such as staffing a shelter or conducting health and wellness checks on medically fragile foster children. These special assignments will supersede assignment to general Disaster Worker assignments.

8. Workload planning

Immediately following a disaster, ensuring the safety and well-being of the Agency's current foster children – especially the medically at-risk – and unaccompanied minors will be the highest priority. Otherwise, HSA will assign available staff as necessary to fulfill the agency's disaster response functions and maintain continuity of services to existing and new clients. HSA's Family and Children's Services division has a completed pandemic plan that identifies which core functions must be maintained at depleted staffing levels during an emergency and which functions can be temporarily suspended.

9. Alternative locations for operations

HSA Family and Children's operations are conducted at multiple sites. In addition to the Agency's administrative headquarters at 170 Otis, these include 1650 Mission, 3801 3rd, 3120 Mission, 995 Potrero Building 80, 2500 18th, and 225 Valencia. 1650 Mission and

1235 Mission are the designated backup headquarter sites. Following a disaster, HSA employees will be expected to report to their normal worksite or designated staging area unless instructed otherwise. If a facility is inaccessible, the Agency's Disaster Operations Center will instruct those workers on an alternative location to report to, dismiss them, or direct those with the ability to do so to telecommute.

Some workers may be assigned to a temporary East Bay office in order to 1) assist with disaster response for foster children placed out-of-county, or 2) perform regular work or other disaster response duties if the City is inaccessible.

10. Orientation and on-going training

A disaster training module has been incorporated into the training provided to all new HSA employees. Additional disaster worker training and response protocols (including protocols specific to child welfare workers) are currently under development and will be rolled out to staff upon completion. HSA staff participate in periodic citywide disaster response exercises and an Agency-wide exercise is being planned for October 2007.

As citywide Disaster Service Workers, all HSA employees are expected to:

1. Review the [Disaster Service Worker Training](#) curriculum;
2. Complete FEMA independent study courses including IS-700 Introduction to National Incident Management System ([NIMS](#)) and IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System ([ICS](#));
3. Disaster Service Workers may also obtain **optional** Functional Response Training, with courses in neighborhood emergency response teams ([NERT](#)), basic first aid, stress management, CPR, and shelter management.

CWS Disaster Response Criteria B: Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases

11. New child welfare investigation process

New child welfare investigations will be conducted in accordance with State and Federal law. However, under extreme circumstances HSA may seek permission from the court to extend some State and Federal mandated deadlines.

12. Implementation process for new services

HSA disaster planning efforts are focused on maintaining continuity of existing services in the aftermath of a disaster. HSA is currently planning implementation protocols for the following new services to be offered in the aftermath of a disaster: immediate health and

safety checks on pre-designated vulnerable clients, inspections of Agency facilities, and provision of mass care and shelter for San Francisco residents impacted by a disaster.

CWS Disaster Response Criteria C: Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster

13. Communication protocols

Staff communication protocols. As discussed in Section 1, if a disaster occurs during business hours, workers should report to their supervisor or senior manager for instructions.

For disasters occurring during non-business hours, HSA managers and supervisors will activate the phone tree and contact staff to check on their status and provide work instructions. HSA staff will also make reasonable efforts to contact their supervisor or other appropriate managers. There is also an out-of-state Agency website to be used in the event of disaster, which will also include instructions and communications to staff, contractors and clients. If communications are down or attempts are unsuccessful, workers should listen to the designated radio stations (KNBR 680AM, KCBS 740AM, KGO 810AM, KQED 88.5FM, or KALW 91.7FM) for instructions.

Communicating with the media. The media should be directed to call the citywide Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for information. HSA staff assigned to shelters may be approached by the media. If answering questions from the media, staff should follow Red Cross media guidelines which are: only give answers concerning the shelter that you are working in; only give answers related to the job you are doing; do not guess, only provide facts; disaster victims cannot be shown on television or interviewed without their consent.

Volunteers. HSA will not directly manage volunteers. Other City departments and community networks with which HSA coordinates have responsibility for volunteer management.

Toll-free number (TTY). HSA has toll free and telecommunications for the deaf compatible communications infrastructure.

14. Communication protocols – contracted services

There is an out-of-state Agency website to be used in the event of disaster, which will include instructions and communications to staff, contractors and clients. Protocols for communicating with specific types of contractors (e.g., meal programs, shelters, foster family agencies) are under development.

CWS Disaster Response Criteria D: Preserve essential program records

HSA's essential program records are primarily stored in the statewide database Child Welfare System Case Management System, otherwise known as CMS. The CMS server maintenance is managed by the State's vendor, IBM Global Services. IBM is contractually bound to the State to provide extensive Disaster Recovery services in the event of emergencies. The services include, but are not limited to, providing access to San Francisco County data from Sacramento or, if necessary, another County welfare office.

As an extra layer of data protection, HSA also backs up San Francisco County caseload extracts from CMS data on Agency servers and portable hard drives of key executive staff, including the Agency's Executive Director, Deputy Director for Family and Children's Services, FCS program managers, and the Director of Information Technology.

There are two key databases with information not available in CMS. Both databases are backed up in the Disaster Preparedness folder on the Agency's O drive. 1) The Medically At-Risk Children (MARC) database is contained in an Excel spreadsheet stored on a social worker's computer at the Child Protection Center. The HSA Deputy Director and two Program Directors also have the file on flash drives. 2) The Baby Moms database is maintained and stored by the Agency's medical consultant at administrative headquarters (170 Otis Street).

CWS Disaster Response Criteria E: Coordinate services and share information with other states

The California Department of Social Services will be responsible for coordinating services and sharing information with other states.

Draft response checklist:

1. If the disaster event is local, account for and ensure the safety of all program staff on site
2. Evacuate facilities as necessary
3. Locate and continue services to foster children.
4. Obtain contact information for evacuating foster families.
5. Document cases of injury or death for foster children.
6. Staff the Hotline and Emergency Response units as needed to meet demand for services
7. Record a voicemail for foster families
8. Contact the biological parents of foster children as appropriate.
9. Develop a database to manage information updates about foster children as reports from workers become available.
10. Prepare facilities to accommodate unaccompanied minors.
11. Develop a database to track all unaccompanied minors entering the Agency's care.
- 12.

Succession of Command

1. HSA Deputy Director:
2. Program Manager:
3. Program Manager:
4. Program Manager:
5. Section Manager:
6. Section Manager:

HSA Employee Roster with Emergency Contacts

